

Orange County Natural Areas Inventory
CRABTREE CREEK MONADNOCK RIDGE
Updated 2004

Site Number: E05

Size: 825 acres

Site Significance: County

USGS Quadrangle: Efland

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES: Although somewhat cut over, this area includes some of the largest undeveloped tracts south of I-85, and serves thus as one of the more important wildlife reservoirs in the county. Stretching several miles from Camp Chestnut Ridge (EO4) to Sevenmile Creek (EO6), this tract also forms an important link in an overland wooded corridor connecting the Cape Fear (Haw) and Neuse (Eno) River systems. The presence of several mature stands of chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*) in combination with the younger successional stands provides optimal habitat for turkey, bobcat, deer, and other upland game animals.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES: Dry-Mesic Oak—Hickory Forest, Piedmont Monadnock Forest

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Although this tract shows signs of having been recently cut in many places, several mature stands of chestnut oak forest still persist along this ridge and even within the pine stands a thick seedling layer of chestnut oaks (*Quercus prinus*) testifies to the eventual return of this community if left alone. For wildlife, this type of disturbance is not so severe as would be the development of the ridge for residences. Although many species remain undocumented for this site, the presence of woodland edges, old fields, and younger stands of forest, in combination with the mature tracts, should enhance the area for many species of game animals, including deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), groundhog (*Marmota monax*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), and mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*). As a consequence of abundant prey, carnivores also do well in such situations and this site should provide optimal habitat for red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), and bobcat (*Lynx rufus*).

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: Orange County protects a small portion as part of the larger Seven Mile Creek Preserve. Landowners should be informed of the significance of the natural values of their property. Forest culture practices should involve selective cutting to allow, for regeneration of native chestnut oak forest.

OWNERSHIP: Orange County, Private

REFERENCES: Sather, D. and S. Hall. 1988. Inventory of the Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Orange County, North Carolina, Appendix B: Biological Documentation of Sites. N.C. Natural Heritage Program, DENR, Raleigh, NC.